

CLAIMSWhat is claimed is:

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1. A process control system capable of executing a function after initiation thereof, the process control system comprising:
- a computer having a memory and a processing unit; and
  - a security module stored in the memory of the computer and adapted to be executed on the processing unit of the computer, wherein the security module analyzes security information collected contemporaneously with the initiation of the function and in association therewith to determine whether the function should be
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- executed.
2. The security system of claim 1, wherein the process control system comprises a network and the function is initiated via a device external to the network.
3. The security system of claim 2, wherein the device includes a client that generates a user interface to collect the security information.
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4. The security system of claim 3, wherein the client passes the security information in encrypted form to the security module.
5. The security system of claim 1, further comprising a process control application stored in the memory of the computer and adapted to be executed on the processing unit of the computer, wherein the process control application generates a
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- security configuration interface for establishing a security parameter for the function executed by the process control system.
6. The security system of claim 5, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of a lock associated with the function executed by the process control system.

7. The security system of claim 5, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the function requires the security information to include a user identification and a password.

5 8. The security system of claim 5, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the function requires the security information to include verification information.

9. The security system of claim 1, wherein the process control system comprises a network and the computer resides at a node of the network.

10 10. The security system of claim 1, further comprising a process control application stored in the memory of the computer and adapted to be executed on the processing unit of the computer, wherein the process control application generates a user interface to collect the security information from the user.



17. The method of claim 11, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the function requires the security information to include verification information.

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20. A software system for a process control system capable of execution of a function, the software system comprising:

a computer-readable medium;

5 a first routine stored on the computer-readable medium that collects security information contemporaneously with the initiation of the function and in association therewith; and

a second routine stored on the computer-readable medium that determines whether the execution of the function is authorized in accordance with the collected security information.

10 21. The software system of claim 20, wherein the first routine is executed in a client-server configuration such that the collected security information is transmitted from a client to a server.

22. The software system of claim 21, wherein the security information is collected via a user interface at the client.

15 23. The software system of claim 21, wherein the client is external to the process control system.

24. The software system of claim 21, further comprising a third routine that encrypts the collected security information prior to transmission from the client to the server.

20 25. The software system of claim 20, further comprising a configuration routine that establishes a security parameter for the function.

26. The software system of claim 25, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of a lock associated with the function.

28. The software system of claim 25, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the function requires the security information to include verification information.

